

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## CONFERENCE REPORT OF H.R. 2055, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2011

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, the legislation we are being asked to vote on today will fund the rest of the federal government through September 30, 2012 and provide \$8.1 billion for disaster aid and recovery assistance. The bills before us are the result of a long, drawn out and at times contentious process, and the outcome is very much the product of hard fought compromise. In candor, this package contains a number of provisions and policy choices that I would not have made and do not support. But I recognize that is the nature of compromise.

On a positive note, the bill adheres to the bipartisan \$1.043 trillion topline agreement from the Budget Control Act. With our national debt now topping \$15 billion, it is important that we continue to maintain fiscal discipline. Additionally, the bill provides modest increases to a number of key federal investments. The Title I education program to help our kids gain proficiency in reading and math is funded at \$14.5 billion, which is \$60 million above the FY 2011 level. Special education gets a \$100 million boost for a total of \$11.6 billion to help our schools meet the educational needs of all our students. Head Start is funded at \$8 billion, which is \$424 million more than last year. And the National Institutes of Health receives a \$299 increase to sustain its lifesaving research. Renewable energy research and development is level funded at \$1.8 billion, small business loans receive a \$123 increase, and the maximum Pell Grant is maintained at \$5550 so that more of our young people can pursue their dream of a higher education.

These are all genuine achievements in our current fiscally constrained environment and deserve to be applauded.

On the other hand, this bill continues the current majority's relentless and misguided attack on the Environmental Protection Agency, which has already seen its budget slashed by 18 percent over the past fiscal year. To feed the extreme right's ideological fervor, today's legislation targets the EPA Administrator's office with a 33 percent cut, slashes clean air and climate research and decreases the job-creating Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water revolving funds by \$101 million. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Americans across the political spectrum want clean air and clean water, and they are depending on their government to provide it to them. While some in other party might think this is good politics, it is terrible policy for the American people. With winter approaching, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, is inadequately funded at \$3.5 billion. And despite the elimination of ideologically driven policy

riders on priorities like health care and Wall Street reform, this appropriations legislation still includes too much policy interference on issues ranging from reproductive health to workplace safety to light bulb efficiency standards to climate change.

## HONORING THE MEMORY OF BENJAMIN GUPTA

**HON. MIKE QUIGLEY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2011

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask that all Members of the House of Representatives join me in honoring the memory of Benjamin Kane Gupta. Ben served the people of the Illinois Fifth District as a staff member for my predecessor Rahm Emanuel in 2007 before going on to work at the U.S. State Department's Global Partnership Initiative. Ben was pursuing Law and Business degrees as a George Washington University graduate student when he died in his sleep Monday. He was 28 years old.

Ben accomplished a lot in his short life. He grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, before attending the Phillips Exeter Academy and Boston University, graduating with degrees in economics and psychology. As a Staff Assistant for Congressman Emanuel he put in long hours staffing the Congressman, serving constituents, and doing whatever was necessary to get the job done. At the State Department, Ben helped bring together public and private resources to solve global economic, health and sustainability challenges.

But the greatest achievement Ben leaves behind is in the memories of those who knew him as a kind and generous spirit who had an incredible work ethic and an infectious sense of humor. When his beloved Red Sox made it to the World Series, he was relentless in his pursuit of tickets not just for himself but for his coworkers as well. He collected every episode of The Simpsons and never passed up a trip to Rockland's to get barbeque for the office.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in remembering this dedicated staffer who died too soon but made the most of the time he had. I offer my deepest condolences to his parents Vinod and Bonnie Gupta, his stepmother Laurel Gottesman Gupta, and his brothers Jess and Alex Gupta. Ben will always live on in the hearts and memories of those that knew him best.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2011

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, I was detained

in a meeting and was unable to be present for a vote in a series of recorded votes. I request the record show that had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 917 (on the question of consideration of H. Res. 491).

## H.R. 1540—THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012, DECEMBER 14, 2011

**HON. MIKE KELLY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2011

Mr. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, under the Constitution, Congress has the solemn responsibility to the American people "to provide for the common defense." Congress exercises this responsibility through passage of H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. Three guiding principles for this legislation are discussed below.

First, the conference report for H.R. 1540 provides the members of our armed forces with all of the resources necessary to complete their missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. The brave men and women who make up our armed forces have a high calling—to protect the American people—and it is incumbent upon us as the Congress to do everything we can to give them the resources they need to get the job done quickly and safely.

Further, this conference report provides military personnel and their families with the support that they need and which is rightfully theirs. Serving as a soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine is no ordinary job, and members of our armed forces as well as their families need to know that no matter what happens here in Washington, DC, there will be no interruption to their pay or benefits as they work night and day to keep us safe.

Lastly, this conference report provides for investment in the future of our nation's security by ensuring that our armed forces are capable of responding to the threats of today and the threats of tomorrow. Our enemies around the world are not standing still; they are actively probing for any weaknesses in our nation's defenses, and we must be vigilant in maintaining both our current capabilities and developing future capabilities. For the sake of our country and our allies who depend on us, we must sustain a strong, flexible, and effective force structure.

The conference report provides authorization for national defense spending in the following amounts: \$554 billion for the base budget and \$115.5 billion for overseas contingency operations, i.e. the war on terrorism. This is a significant reduction in funding from the original House-passed version to comply with the first tier of the Budget Control Act's

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